



The Archipelago is an independent design studio in Leeds founded by Michael Lewis and Zosia Berkieta-Lewis. The couple strive to keep the studio small, work with like-minded people and ensure that their personal projects become part of studio life.
www.thearchipelago.eu

OUR DESIGN SPACE IS...

PARED BACK TO BASICS

The couple behind design studio **The Archipelago** talk about how they found the perfect place for their studio, and why their space showcases all the things they love

When Zosia Berkieta-Lewis and Michael Lewis decided to move their studio out of their home, they had something quite specific in mind – it had to be modest, with character and lots of natural light. After looking at various converted factories and mills around Leeds city centre, they finally found their spot: a beautiful Victorian factory that was once used to make pins for the textile industry.

“The conversion to studio spaces was still underway when we viewed the vacant, unfinished units,” says Berkieta-Lewis, “but we fell in love not just with the setting of Tower Works – next to the Leeds-Liverpool canal, and with Italianate towers in the grounds – but with the stripped

wooden floors, panoramic views and huge Victorian windows,” she recalls. “We signed up straight away and are still in love with our studio,” Lewis adds.

The Archipelago’s space houses a collection of design books and periodicals along with monographs and biographies of inspiring creatives (1). In pride of place on the bookshelf (top left) is *In the Sweet Bye and Bye*, a book on the life and work of artist Margaret Kilgallen. “Her work is some of the most beautiful we have ever seen,” says Berkieta-Lewis.

Plants (2) have also always been a part of The Archipelago’s studio. In 2015, the couple started a studio exhibition project called *The Plant Room*, based around their

love of greenery, ceramics and illustration. The project also includes a mini market, which sells modern ceramics designed for plants from Tall Boys Beer Market in Leeds city centre. “It’s fair to say we really do love plants,” says Lewis.

Another of The Archipelago’s loves is *The Moomins*, and cups featuring the characters (3) are also in the duo’s home. “Zosia has fond memories of the original Moomin books from her childhood,” says Lewis. “Tove Jansson’s illustrations are beautiful and intricate, and you always see something new that you hadn’t seen before when you look at them,” he explains.

Illustration is also prominent in the studio, and framed screenprints, risographs and exhibition posters

perch on picture ledges on every wall (4). “We change these up whenever we can to keep the studio feeling fresh,” says Berkieta-Lewis, “but a few favourites never lose their place.”

When the couple were setting up the space, they wanted to keep it as simple, uncluttered and pared-back as possible. This influenced their choice of furniture, and after they had asked architect Simon Jones to make a set of three desks topped in mid-grey linoleum, they paired them with a set of vintage stick-back chairs from Sweden that they found online (5). “Once the chairs arrived, it felt like we had the beginning of something,” says Lewis. “Today, our studio is a place to make, with space to think.” □



1



2



3



4



5



Kenzo Mayama Kramarz has 15 years' experience as a designer and creative director. His new venture KMK Studio specialises in interactive work. kmkstudio.co

NEW VENTURES

SETTING UP SHOP

Kenzo Mayama Kramarz reveals how his experience with clients such as Warner Bros, Google and Audi propelled him to start his own studio

Having worked as a freelance creative director for Google's creative think tank, Google Zoo, and as design director for ad agency BBH, **Kenzo Mayama Kramarz** is certainly not lacking in experience. His own studio, **KMK Studio**, was officially set up two years ago, but **Mayama Kramarz** was so busy with **Google** that it remained a side project until this summer. He tells us about how his **Hackney-based** studio is influenced by his past work, and how it works in practice.

Why did you decide to set up your own studio, and why did you now feel like the right time to properly give it a go?

Setting up my own studio came from a desire to create a space where I felt more in control of my own time and creative attention. I wanted to focus on developing a more personal voice, which would reflect the experiences I had working across graphic design, digital and advertising. It just happened to be the right time to do so, and it's been a cool ride so far.

What kinds of projects have you been working on in your new studio?

It's been a mix of commissioned and personal work. My objective is to provide creative direction with a strong emphasis on design, in relation to both process and execution. Recent projects include a digital experience for Google Play, which merges iconic films and their locations, and a bespoke typography that comments on London's housing crisis.

How have your experiences working both for a large ad agency (BBH) and client-side at Google helped you?

All these experiences were extremely valuable and helped me shape the vision I try to implement in my studio today. At BBH, it was a constant exercise of converting brand strategy into compelling storytelling, whereas with Google I was able to explore different ways of using technology to touch people's lives.

Your studio is focused on design and interactive direction, what does that mean to you and why is it important?

Interactive direction, in my opinion, means making sure a piece of digital work ticks all the important boxes: it has to be accessible, have a clear sense of purpose, and be remarkable or delightful.

Do you have any employees?

At the moment it's a one-man studio supported by friends and collaborators that I occasionally team up with, depending on the project. These people are designers, coders, photographers and illustrators, and are not only a pleasure to work with, but also enormously expand the creative reach of the work I do.

What advice would you give someone planning to set up their own studio?

When I decided to leave BBH, Sir John Hegarty gave me one piece of advice that I revisit on a regular basis: have a point of view. ■